CBI raid on Palace-on-Wheels train

702. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:
SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of agreement between Indian Railways and Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation to run the train 'Palace-on-Wheels';

(b) whether the C.B.I, conducted surprise raid on this train near Jodhpur in September and found 67 passengers' travelling without tickets;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken against the passengers found without tickets and the total fine realised;

(d) whether Government's attention has also been drawn to the news-item "Freebies in the name of promoting tourism" published in the Statesman dated 10th September, 2001; and

(c) rf so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) The Palace on Wheels is running on the basis of the agreement signed in 1992. Since the introduction of the Broad Gauge Palace on Wheels in 1995*96, no agreement could be signed between the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) and the Railways, due to a number of unresolved issues. The agreement is expected to be signed shortly.

(b) to (d) The CBI conducted a raid on this train in September, 2001. One railway official with his spouse travelled on complimentary basis. Further as per the details furnished by the RTDC, there were vacant seats after accommodating the paid tourists on the Palace on Wheels leaving on 5.9.2001. This was utilized for familiarization tour, which is conducted every year and the RTDC invited representatives

from media, travel writers, tour operators, high digpitaries and senior officials to travel on this train. The number of passengers is under verification from the RTDC by the CBI.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The matter is under investigation of the CBI.

Conversion of Kanpur-Kasganj M.G. Line

703. DR. SWAMI SAKSHI JI MAHARAJ: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether conversion of Kanpur-Kasganj MG rail line into BG rail line was planned to be completed long back;

(b) if so, the progress made so far;

(c) the reasons for the delay; and

(d) the steps being taken to expedite the conversion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No target has yet been fixed.

(b) to (d) Do not arise. However, work is planned to be taken up and completed in phases. Earthwork and minor bridges are in progress. The work is being progressed as per availability of resources.

Shortage of Coaches and Wagons

†704. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(e) whether it is a fact that there is an acute shortage of coaches and wagons in the country;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and

(g) the number of coaches and wagons being manufactured every year in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.